

**Statement by
Patricia Fleischmann Johnson
April 26, 1999**

My name is Patricia Fleischmann Johnson and I am the daughter of Albert Fleischmann, who resides in an Assisted Living Facility, (ALF) in Pinellas County Florida. Dad is 85 years old, retired from the Board of Directors of ACE Hardware, has sold all seven of his hardware stores. He is a former board member of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, and member of the Gulf Marine Hall of Fame. Dad moved into an ALF in 1997, after having an aneurysm repaired.

I am by profession, the President of Adult Comprehensive Protection Services, Inc., a charity that serves the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida. We serve 256 wards of the court, and of those wards, presently 134 live in ALF's. I have served the elderly and persons with disabilities for more than 20 years in various capacities. My formal comments will be directed to you as Mr. Fleischmann's daughter, but I will be open to comments and questions on others that I serve s Guardian.

On January 16, 1999, my father walked from his villa to the dining room. This is a nice five minute walk for him. He did not feel well and put his head down on the table. He told the staff that he was too ill to eat. They did not respond. Rather than help Dad to their Extended Care Facility on the grounds, the staff let him walk back to his villa alone. He immediately called me at home, whereupon I went to him, found him gray in color, and took him to the closest emergency room. The Doctor told me that dad had experienced a heart attack that morning. He had a second heart attack in the emergency room.

It was a long day,, however, at about 6:00 p.m. that same evening I went home to change and get ready to return to the hospital intensive care unit. I noticed that my beeper had never gone off, and that there were no messages on my phone. I called the facility and told them that I had not gotten to visit with my father during the day, and wanted to know whether he was OK, and asked if he had eaten his dinner. The staff member told me **HE WAS JUST FINE**. Of course I was very upset and did tell the staff member that she was wrong.

Before Dad returned to the ALF, I met with the administrator. She increased his level of care, charging him an additional \$400.00 a month. This meant that he was to go to the nurses station two times a day for his medication and blood pressure check, and they would check on him every two hours in his villa, and encourage him to drink fluids. Within 13 days I called the physician to tell him that Dad looked really bad to me. The Doctor sent his physician assistant to the ALF. When she saw Dad, she immediately had him readmitted to the hospital for dehydration.

To summarize the problems we have experienced:

They did not attend to Dad when he said he did not feel well.

At best the staff member did not bother to check on Dad's condition, and at worst, just lied.

They did not help him keep his fluid to an adequate level.

They did not recognize that he was dehydrated and needed hospitalization.

I don't want to leave here without acknowledging the needs of my 134 wards that live in ALF's in Pinellas County Florida. I have had wards that have spent all of their money at a facility, only to be

asked to move when the funds are gone. They are then forced to move into a facility that accept the inadequate \$22.00 per da that the State of Florida pays to care for them. The food is terrible, supervision is inadequate, and there is no care to speak of. An attorney recently referred t one of these families as a "filthy house of horrors."

Finally, I want to be clear that Dad wants to stay with the friends he has made at the ALF, as this represents his independence. Dad and I both want the care to be better, and hope that the quality of care will improve for the elders we all love. I am honored to have had the opportunity to appear before you today.